



Public Service Commission
South Carolina



Public Hearing

Docket #2012-177-WS

December 3, 2012

Tega Cay, SC

The Good Life - Interrupted

Citizen Efforts to Clean up Tega Cay Water Service, Inc.



Tega Cay Water Citizen Advisory Council, August 2011

Sewage Brings Us Together

For two decades, Tega Cay residents have endured countless unacceptable problems with our wastewater and water service from Utilities, Inc. subsidiary Tega Cay Water Service (TCWS).

How can Tega Cay offer “the good life” of a golf and lake community given our environmental, health and safety concerns?

TCWS Problems: Top-Ten Ranking

1. Multiple sewage spills in the same locations, year after year
2. Unreported/underreported sewage spills to regulators
3. Five hours to respond to a severely gushing manhole in a crowded Lake Wylie cove!?
4. Shoddy repair work
5. Inadequate maintenance
6. Delayed mandated wastewater treatment plant upgrades
7. Inadequate sewage spill notification to residents
8. Customer service phone line with often-long wait periods and rude, unhelpful agents
9. Poor lift station and wastewater treatment plant aesthetics
10. Unused TCWS pump/well houses on city property

***All this despite rate hikes in 1999, 2006 & 2010.
And TCWS already is planning its next rate hike.***

Multiple Sewage Spills – Too Often Unreported

1. **Multiple sewage spills** in the **same locations**, year after year
 - Some Tega Cay residents **refuse to swim** in Lake Wylie.
 - This affects **all** Lake Wylie residents' **property values, personal health, safety, and lake water quality**.
 - **TCWS inadequately responds** to these customer and environmental concerns.
2. **Unreported/underreported sewage spills** to regulators
 - This shows **TCWS blatant disregard for regulatory requirements**.
 - Residents have photos and videos documenting these spills.

How would you like this in *your yard, flowing into Lake Wylie?*



Lift Station 3

Inadequate Response Time

3. **Five hours** for TCWS to respond to a **severely gushing manhole** in a **crowded Lake Wylie cove**!?
- This negligence **directly contradicts company policy** of “onsite assistance within 30 minutes of a spill.”
 - TCWS rationale in March 2009 was that it was responding to **5-10 other similar spills during heavy rains**.
 - TCWS is **understaffed** during critical, heavy-volume periods.



*Erosion caused by
sanitary sewage
overflow*

March 25, 2006

Lift Station 3

*Lift station **spews** raw sewage into Lake Wylie*



March 25, 2006

Lift Station 3

Repairs Inadequate & Unsafe

4. Shoddy TCWS repair work

- A **lid off a manhole for a month** is plenty of time for our children, pets and wild animals to fall in.
- Temporary pumps in significant pump/lift stations create **safety and quality concerns**.
- **Five days** is **too long** for a **family** to have **sewage in the home** before TCWS addresses cleanup.



*Lids should **not** be **left off** manhole covers!*

(Has anyone seen Fluffy?)

Feb. 25, 2011

Tara Tea Road

*Temporary pumps should **not** be used! (They can't do as good of a job as permanent ones.)*



Lift Station 3

Maintenance Below Standards

5. Inadequate TCWS maintenance

- Sewage pipes are original 1970s clay pipes subject to cracks, exacerbated by tree roots blocking flow through the pipe.
- **Inadequate maintenance and infrastructure investment** contributed to **spills**.



*Clay pipes
require
better
maintenance!*

04/26/2011

TCWS customer yard

Mandated Upgrades – Postponed

6. Delayed wastewater treatment plant upgrades

- DHEC **mandated in 2006** that TCWS **complete** wastewater treatment plant upgrades **by 2008**; however TCWS **finished in 2010**.
 - **Disregard for the environment**
 - **Disregard for the regulator**
- Both TCWS plants **violated phosphorous requirements every month** from 08/2008 to 11/2010, **even after the 06/2010 plant upgrades**.
 - **Phosphorous** leads to **oxygen depletion, algae growth** and **drinking-water taste/odor issues**.

*This Tega Cay pipe looks like the Fort Mill wastewater line that ruptured May 16, 2011 spilling 1MM gallons of sewage into Steel Creek – **is this properly maintained?***



March 13, 2011

Sewage pipe to wastewater treatment plant 3

Inadequate Customer Service

7. Inadequate sewage spill notification to residents

- Residents complain of not being notified by TCWS when there is a **sewer spill in the neighborhood**.
- And often **children play in these areas**.

8. TCWS customer service phone line with with **often-long wait periods** and **rude, unhelpful agents**

- 45-minute waits are too long.
 - **Understaffing** during heavy-volume periods
- Especially when the agent **doesn't have the answers** you seek...
 - Insufficient training or hiring practices
 - Poor communication

***Sewage** runs to Lake Wylie*



March 25, 2006

Lift Station 3

Offensive Aesthetics

9. Poor lift station and wastewater treatment plant aesthetics
- Appearance: **eyesore**
 - **Stench**: nosesore
 - Affecting Tega Cay's **golf course**, **public** and **residential properties**
 - **Loud, unsightly trucks**: Disruptive to residents, property damage and stinky



*The lovely
views and
smells of
Tega Cay*

TCWS customer street

Offensive Aesthetics (cont'd)

10. Unused TCWS pump/well houses on city property

- Some **block school buses and moving vans**
- **Eyesores**



*Unused
pump/well
house*

Marquesas Avenue

*At the 02/23/11 Tega Cay Water Citizen Advisory Council meeting it was noted that the city may take ownership of the structures with the intent of demolishing them; **we have not heard this discussed subsequently.***

What We Want

Tega Cay Water Service to:

- 1. Eliminate / significantly reduce sewage spills in Tega Cay and into Lake Wylie**
- 2. Offer efficient, high-quality water and wastewater service in Tega Cay**
- 3. Improve aesthetics related to water and wastewater service in Tega Cay**

You to support:

- Proposed state legislation requiring higher accountability and greater transparency on all “rate increase” monies collected**
- Fines collected going directly to the affected area**

Tega Cay residents to report spills, odors and service complaints to:

- 1. ccampbe@regstaff.sc.gov - Mr. Chad Campbell, Office of Regulatory Staff, Consumer Services (tracking complaints)**
- 2. harringc@dhec.sc.gov - Mr. Greg Harrington, DHEC, District Engineer Associate (tracking complaints)**
- 3. maraintr@dhec.sc.gov - Ms. Tammy Mahrain, DHEC (tests water to ensure safety - 803-201-1387 cell; 803-285-7461 office)**
- 4. TCWaterAdvisory@hotmail.com - Tega Cay Water Citizen Advisory Council (“CC” us so we are aware)**

Relevant Parties

Utility Companies

- **TCWS:** Tega Cay Water Service, Inc.; a Utilities, Inc. subsidiary (also d.b.a. Carolina Water Service); serves approximately 1,800 homes in the original sections of Tega Cay since 1991; 19 lift stations, 1,091 manholes, 2 operating and 2 non-operating wastewater treatment plants, 30 miles of gravity sewer pipe, 7 unused well houses
- **TCUD:** Tega Cay Utility Department (owned by the City of Tega Cay); serves areas not served by TCWS

Regulators

- **DHEC:** South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Commission; TCWS regulator; grants permits to operate wastewater treatment plants; governs sewage spills
- **Office of Regulatory Staff:** TCWS regulator; approves rate increases

Advocates for Improvement

- **Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation:** Advocate for Lake Wylie; negotiated original consent order by DHEC against TCWS in protest against polluting discharges to water; advises TC Water Citizen Advisory Council; www.catawbariverkeeper.org
- **Tega Cay Water Citizen Advisory Council:** As Tega Cay residents, we come together for a more powerful voice to demand efficient, higher quality wastewater and water service under TCWS with less offensive aesthetics, odors and environmental impact. In doing so, we benefit all of Tega Cay's health and safety, quality of life and property values.

**Please help us clean up Tega
Cay and Lake Wylie !**

Thank you.

Tega Cay Water Citizen Advisory Council, August 2011



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